

March 18, 2003 CPC



STAFF'S
REQUEST ANALYSIS
AND
RECOMMENDATION

03SN0212

RCTC Wholesale Corporation, d/b/a Alltel/Dominion VA Power (Vepco)

Dale Magisterial District
West line of Belmont Road

REQUEST: Conditional Use to permit a communications tower in an Agricultural (A) District.

PROPOSED LAND USE:

A communications tower and associated improvements are planned. Specifically, the tower will be incorporated into the existing electrical transmission structure located on the property. The tower is proposed to be 128 feet high; however, the Ordinance would allow 150 feet.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend approval for the following reasons:

- A. The proposal conforms to the Public Facilities Plan which suggests that communications tower locations should generally be located to minimize the impact on existing or planned areas of development and that energy and communications facilities should co-locate whenever feasible.
- B. Incorporating the communications facilities into an existing electrical transmission structure will eliminate the need for additional freestanding communications towers in the area, thereby minimizing tower proliferation.
- C. Similar co-locations have occurred throughout the County with no known adverse impacts on nearby development.

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- D. The recommended conditions will further minimize the possibility of any adverse impact on area development, the County Communications System or the County Airport.

(NOTE: CONDITIONS MAY BE IMPOSED OR THE PROPERTY OWNER MAY PROFFER OTHER CONDITIONS.)

CONDITIONS

1. Any communications tower shall be co-located on existing utility structures. (P)
2. The tower and equipment shall be designed and installed so as not to interfere with the Chesterfield County Communications System. At the time of site plan review, the owner/developer shall submit information as deemed necessary by the Chesterfield County Communications and Electronics staff to determine if an engineering study should be performed to analyze the possibility of radio frequency interference with the County system, based upon tower location and height, and upon the frequencies and effective radiated power generated by tower-mounted equipment. Prior to release of a building permit, the study, if required, shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Chesterfield County Communications and Electronics staff. (GS)
3. The developer shall be responsible for correcting any frequency problems which affect the Chesterfield County Communications System caused by this use. Such corrections shall be made immediately upon notification by the Chesterfield County Communications and Electronics staff. (GS)
4. The color and lighting system for the tower shall be as follows:
 - a. The tower shall be gray or another neutral color, acceptable to the Planning Department.
 - b. The tower shall not be lighted. (P)
5. Any building or mechanical equipment shall comply with Section 19-595 and 19-570 (b) and (c) of the Zoning Ordinance relative to architectural treatment of building exteriors and screening of mechanical equipment. (P)

(NOTE: The aforementioned Ordinance sections would require the screening of mechanical equipment located on the building or ground from

adjacent properties and public rights of way. Screening would not be required for the tower or tower-mounted equipment.)

6. At such time that the tower ceases to be used for communications purposes for a period exceeding twelve (12) consecutive months, the owner/developer shall dismantle and remove the tower and all associated equipment from the property. (P)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Location:

West line of Belmont Road, north of Drexelbrook Road. Tax ID 764-684-Part of 8175 (Sheet 11).

Existing Zoning:

A

Size:

0.1 acre

Existing Land Use:

Public utility (Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission line)

Adjacent Zoning and Land Use:

North and West – A, A with a Conditional Use Planned Development; public utility, residential or vacant

South – R-9; Vacant

East – A; Residential, Church or vacant

UTILITIES

The proposed use will not necessitate a manned facility; therefore, the use of the public water and wastewater systems are not required.

ENVIRONMENTAL

If construction of the access road to the Dominion Virginia Power transmission line and associated improvements disturbs more than 2,500 square feet of land, a land disturbance permit will be required.

FIRE AND TRANSPORTATION

The proposed tower and associated equipment will have minimal impact on fire/rescue services and the transportation network.

COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS

The Zoning Ordinance requires that any structure over eighty (80) feet in height be reviewed by the County's Public Safety Review Team for potential detrimental impacts the structure could have on the County's Radio Communications System microwave paths. This determination must be made prior to erection of the proposed communications tower.

A preliminary review of this proposal has indicated that the facility will not interfere with the County's Communications System; however, as a further precaution, if this request is approved, a condition should be imposed to ensure that the tower is designed and constructed so as not to interfere with the County Communications System (Condition 2). Once the tower is in operation, if interference occurs, the owner/developer should be required to correct any problems. (Condition 3)

COUNTY AIRPORT

A preliminary review of this proposal indicates that, given the approximate location and elevation of the proposed installation, it appears the tower will not adversely affect the County Airport.

LAND USE

Comprehensive Plan:

The request property lies within the boundaries of the Central Area Plan which suggests the property is appropriate for residential use.

The Public Facilities Plan, an element of the Comprehensive Plan, suggests that energy and communications uses should be co-located, whenever feasible, to minimize impacts on existing and future areas of development. The Plan suggests such co-location would be appropriate on existing public utility structures.

Area Development Trends:

The tower site is part of a large, agriculturally zoned acreage parcel which is occupied by a Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission structure within an easement. Surrounding properties are zoned agriculturally and residentially and have been developed for single family residences on acreage parcels or on lots

in Pennwood Subdivision. The Plan suggests that residential development will continue to occur along this portion of Belmont Road.

On September 24, 1997, the Board of Supervisors, upon a favorable recommendation from the Planning Commission, approved a Conditional Use Planned Development on a portion of the parent parcel to permit a 126 foot communications tower and associated equipment within the Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission line easement (97SN0285). Specifically, a communications antenna was permitted to be co-located on an existing Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission structure. These electrical transmission structures and antenna remain.

Development Standards:

The request property lies within an Emerging Growth Area. The development standards are intended to promote the renovation and improvement of areas that have already experienced development. However, because the request property is zoned Agricultural (A), development is not required to meet the development standards for Emerging Growth Areas. A condition should be imposed to require compliance with Emerging Growth Area requirements relative to the architectural treatment of the proposed equipment building and screening of mechanical equipment. (Condition 5)

As noted herein, the request property is occupied by Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission structures. The proposed communications tower will be located within one (1) of these transmission structures (Condition 1). Access to the tower site will be via an existing access driveway to Belmont Road. Given the proximity of area residences, the communications tower should be gray or another neutral color and should not be lighted so as to minimize the visual impact on area residences. (Condition 4)

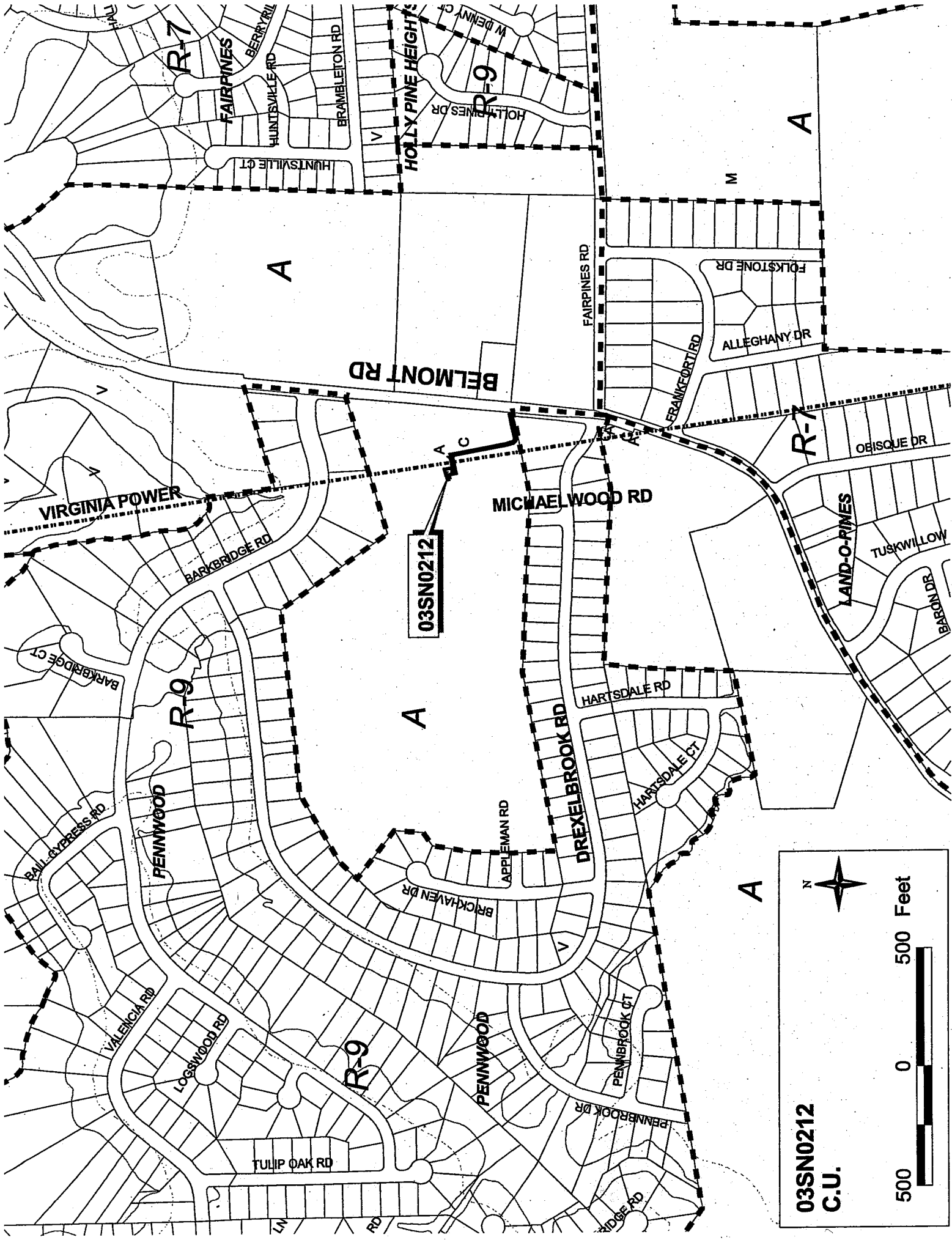
Consistent with past actions on similar facilities and to ensure that the tower does not become a maintenance problem or an eyesore, the tower should be removed at such time that it ceases to be used for communications purposes. (Condition 6)

CONCLUSIONS

The Public Facilities Plan suggests that communications towers should be located to minimize the impact on existing or planned areas of development and that energy and communications facilities should co-locate whenever feasible. The communications tower will be incorporated into an existing Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission structure. The addition of the communications facilities into the structure of the existing transmission tower does not generate a visual impact that is significantly greater than the visual impact of the existing Dominion Virginia Power electrical transmission tower. This co-location will eliminate the need for an additional

freestanding communications tower in the area, thereby minimizing tower proliferation. In addition, the recommended conditions will further minimize the possibility of any adverse impact on area development, as well as on the County Communications System or the County Airport.

Given these considerations, approval of this request is recommended.



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